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BULLETIN

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Some Aspects of Good Adoptive Practices

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AGENCIES which place children for adoption are fortunate in that they have a well-defined piece of work to do. Their objective can be stated in terms something like this: For the child who has no own family who can care for him, or whose family wishes to have him adopted, the agency has a specific service to perform. It determines who of these children will be legally and personally eligible for adoption. Thereafter it comes to grips with those factors of the child's life which are most likely to help him find his way into a satisfactory adoption relationship.

With an objective as clear cut as this, there is a tendency on the one hand to over-simplify the whole adoption procedure, or on the other hand to avoid getting involved with a service which implies so much active and even judgmental responsibility. Recently, partly because of a greater awareness of the constructive possibilities in relationships by adoption, and partly because of community pressure, agencies are taking a new look at the values in agency participation in adoption placements.

Because placement for adoption involves direct and far-reaching responsibilities, agencies sometimes try too hard for guarantees of successful outcome. They turn to science and other professions, hoping to find standards based on scientific knowledge, easily measured, easily distinguished, and readily applied, to achieve a preconceived idea of what they consider a successful outcome for their clients. There is a tendency to want to protect the participants and the community from all risks. However, day by day work with adoptable children and adoptive parents gives evidence that scientific knowledge is still too limited to enable us to count on science to predict outcome in human development and human relationship, except in a very restricted way. As we work and consider thoughtfully our part in adoption work, we learn to perceive the relativity of the factors which have value for the human beings in the foster relationship, and learn to trust the ability of the

major participants to come to grips with a relationship which they themselves have chosen to create and to live with and which has meaning for them.

While the agency relies to a considerable extent on the knowledge gathered by specialists, such as the doctor, the lawyer, the psychologist, the geneticist, the psychiatrist, and other professional groups, it is the agency, with its staff of well-trained case workers, experienced in the field of child welfare, which, in the last analysis, must take the responsibility for the placement of the child for adoption. There always remains with us child placing workers the responsibility for determining the portion of the knowledge of the other professions which belongs to our problem and the ways in which we can best use their contributions, that we can be alive to the various aspects of our responsibility for the placements.

Standards, policies and procedures, and the application of them to daily work, make up an agency's "practices" in placing children for adoption. Articles, pamphlets and books have been published to help an agency to evolve its "practices." It is, however, out of its day by day experience with the problems of accepting children for adoption, caring for them, and working with foster parents that the agency achieves the capacity to take with conviction and fearlessness the responsibilities inherent in carrying out its placement program, and to take them without leaning too heavily for support on other professional groups.

An agency which places children for adoption has to think about and clarify its own practices, partly in the light of theoretical knowledge, and partly in relation to its practical situation. Among the problems which confront us are questions such as what do we consider good social history of a child who is to be placed for adoption; how do we secure this family background, and what use do we make of it. The agency and its medical staff have to decide upon the quality and the nature of the medical examinations

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and subsequent treatments, and when and how examinations are made, and what the agency does about the findings. Our own agency has been using psychological tests for children as an aid in placement for a long time. We have made recently a follow-up study of a group of children who were given psychological tests as babies in boarding homes and who are now being re-tested several years after their adoption. Analyses of the findings will enable us to evaluate the predictive value of the infants' tests of this particular group and help point the way for a future program. Some of us have had a special interest in giving thought to the type of foster home study which has greatest value for everybody concerned and worked on our procedure from the first intake interview to the study of the home, and finally to the placement of the child. When do we consider care and observation of a child in a boarding home before adoption placement necessary, and why? How is the supervision carried on and how does the worker help prepare the child for his adoption home? It is interesting to consider wherein the supervision of the child after his placement in a home for adoption has a new focus, and how the worker fits into the picture during the interval before legal adoption. Some of us believe that older children as well as babies can be placed for adoption. How and when does the agency expand its program to include the placement of these older children? Some consideration has been given to the way in which the court and the agency cooperate in the actual legal adoption when complete responsibility is finally transferred to the foster parents. Perhaps the mere enumeration of some of these topics for consideration indicates the varied problems to which an agency placing children for adoption has to give attention and on what basis it must clarify and re-define its practices.

One consideration which seems to me related to all good child adoption practices, and which distinguishes professional placements from casual placements, is the matter of "timing." Skill in knowing how to use time implies some understanding of the ways of human emotions. Time can give the agency and the individuals most intimately connected with the adoption an opportunity for a mutual participation and exchange of information. It offers the client, whether it is the adult or the child, an opportunity for developing and clarifying his experiences. Time is also necessary to meet some of the standards which the agency has set for itself as basic for good service in behalf of its clients.

There are some major steps which nearly every child and every foster family go through as they pro-

ceed from separateness toward a relationship by adoption. Each of these steps has significance and value of its own, but each also has a relationship to the next step. It takes professional skill, both administrative and case work, to consider constructively the timing interval between these various steps, and many factors play a part; as for instance, the stage of the individual's readiness for change, the worker's capacity to evaluate intuitive as well as reasoned responses, and the differences in the rates of individuals' capacities for growth and development. There are also the stern realities of the practical administrative set-up of the agency itself and of the community's resources or lack of them.

Administrative and case work skills point the way for determining when and how arbitrary time limits can be used constructively, and when flexibility on time intervals is essential. Sets of external factors as well as the subjective reactions of the clients, and the workers, play a part in the different uses of the time element.

Some of us are making increasing use of arbitrarily determined time limits, minimum as well as maximum. For instance, while we may take a baby of an unmarried mother under care in a boarding home when it is discharged from the hospital, we set the minimum period of four months before a final legal surrender of the baby is considered. This four-months' interval gives opportunity for mutual participation on the part of those vitally concerned and preparation for the next step for both the mother and the baby, and helps to prevent too unconsidered and hasty action. Some of us have given thought to the possibility of using more consciously and actively time limit intervals in work with the unmarried mother who can neither accept her child nor separate herself from it enough to release it. One can see that definite time periods might have value for both the mother and the child, perhaps at nine months after birth, at fifteen months, and at eighteen months.

We arbitrarily say that under ordinary circumstances one year shall elapse between the time of placement of the child and the final consent for legal adoption, and that during that interval, supervision suited to the individual situation will be maintained with a consciousness of limits set by this time period.

Our experience has shown us that a period of care in a boarding home, where our own staff members do the case work in the preparation of the child for placement for adoption, helps the child in his transition to the adoptive home. While we have not used arbitrary time limits for this period of preparation, there is always some consciousness of the time factor.

Too great delay and caution in the placement of a child may be as depriving to him as too great haste would be destructive. Experienced workers in an agency which is geared to an adoption placement program get indications from the child himself when the time has come for him to move on to his adoption home, and from the would-be foster parents when they are ready to begin their new family relationship.

The first interview with prospective adoptive parents, aside from serving as a time for exchange of information and for mutual exploring of what is involved in adoption, reveals something of the degree of readiness of the applicants for undertaking the various steps necessary for taking a child for adoption. The time interval between the first interview and the study of the foster home is partially determined by conscious time planning. And again, skillful use of the time interval between the foster home study and the placement of the child prepares the way for a more ready acceptance of their being united in parent-child relationship.

In recent years, as attention has centered on the

improvement of the laws regulating adoptions, by including a consideration of the social aspects of adoptions, the tendency to expect the adoption laws to correct poor adoption practices has grown. While a good adoption law is of incalculable value to the child and the foster parents, both legally and psychologically, it can be effective only in the area in which the law has responsibilities, and cannot take the place of good placement practices. The adoption law must not be confused with the laws which regulate child placement. The time for preventing the unnecessary break-up of own families and for guarding against the formation of destructive family ties by adoption is not when the petition is filed in the adoption court, but when the first impulse toward adoption asserts itself, either on the part of the parents who wish to plan placement for their child, or the would-be foster parents who want to adopt a child.

While adoption work is a highly specialized service to children which needs its own set-up and standards and policies, it also needs to be an integral part of a general, all-around good program of child welfare services.

The Hoover Company Learns about Child Placement

THE way in which the Hoover Company of North Canton, Ohio, learned about the necessity of case work service for adequate child placement is an interesting story, related by its President, Mr. H. Hoover.

Behind it appear the telling results of the spade work of the Child Welfare League of America in improving the standards of child placement service throughout our country, and of the consultation and educational services of the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children.

Called upon to take responsibility for receiving and finding homes for 84 children of the Company's British representatives, "We would have assumed all the home placement responsibilities, without professional aid, and with blind confidence of success resulting from our complete lack of understanding of the prime requisites of the successful foster parent," related Mr. Hoover.

"The financial ability of foster parents to care for children is of far less importance than the love of children and the patient and sympathetic manner in which the needed services will be rendered.

"Just a business or social acquaintanceship with prospective foster parents is far from enough on which to base a decision about the use of a home. The opinion of the family doctor and the minister help-

fully enters into the measurement of these essential requirements. Matching child and foster parent is of great importance and predetermines the results.

"The inexperienced person will accept surface conditions as sufficient grounds to justify placements, while the trained child welfare worker will explore deeply for the essential requirements before coming to a decision."

With real courage Mr. Hoover revealed that—"In the initial stages of our undertaking we were somewhat disappointed when the U. S. Committee injected the assistance of a professional child welfare worker into the requirements for home placement. Now that the final efforts of the task have been concluded we shudder to think of the amateurish and quite unsatisfactory manner in which the efforts would have been made without this professional assistance.

"We now understand the important difference between mere placing of children in the homes of foster parents as we would have done and the fitting of them into homes in the expert manner in which the professional case worker performs the task."

We see this not only as a tribute to case work, but as an encouraging example of an effective cooperative venture between the professional worker and the progressive layman.

BULLETIN

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The Bulletin Is Yours

WHO reads the BULLETIN? To know who you are and what you are thinking, planning and doing is of utmost importance.

We who are charged with responsibility for children who need care away from their own homes are still finding our way to standard practices based on sound purpose and philosophy. The scene is one of ever-changing concepts as to the nature and the degree of that responsibility. Public and private agencies, agencies concerned about and agencies concerned with the actual care of children, parents and relatives, all must find their place in this complex situation. The service of child welfare compels a multiplicity of skills and resources far beyond the capacity of one agency, leader or community to develop on its own.

Practice in any field depends for its inspiration on exchange of opinion. It has long been recognized that the most important person in the child welfare field is the one closest to the child. Not only is she most important to the client, but also to the profession, for in her day by day experience she is testing out new points of view, new processes, new developments. Her questions and thoughts challenge accepted methods and procedure. The benefits which can accrue from exchange of opinion will therefore be immeasurably increased as the flow of opinion stems more and more from and returns to this person closest to the child. An articulate staff is essential to a growing, developing service.

It was natural, therefore, that the BULLETIN, in considering how it may serve to further the expanded Child Welfare League program with continued and growing effectiveness, should come to the vital question, "Who reads the BULLETIN?" If the BULLETIN, like the League, is

"to work together aggressively for good standards of service,
"to seek counsel among our leaders,
"to exchange information,
"to qualify to speak for children in need,"*

it will want to know how to reach not only those who lead, guide and support child welfare but also those who are closest to the service to children. Does the busy executive keep the BULLETIN on his desk for that rare moment when he will be free to read? How is its circulation among staff members assured?

This is your BULLETIN. It will keep abreast of and serve your needs increasingly as you challenge it and contribute to it from your day by day experience. You must tell us what needs the BULLETIN is meeting and how and what other needs you will want it to serve.

Specifically, you will note that the BULLETIN presents an article on some professional aspects of the child welfare field, an editorial on some timely issue or situation, News from the Field, a Readers' Forum presenting some question for discussion or some subject upon which information has been requested, Book Notes on current literature, and our most recent addition, "The Board Member Speaks." Circulate your BULLETIN and let us know what modifications would seem indicated. Write us of your experiences and your questions. Make this your BULLETIN.

—HENRIETTA L. GORDON

* See the June BULLETIN, "Origins of the New Program of Child Welfare League of America," by Mr. Areson.

Children in Exile

FOSTER parents of refugee children will find much sound guidance in "Children in Exile," by Dr. Geraldine Pederson-Krag. She has written this pamphlet at the League's request out of a deep understanding of child life in the three very different environments of England, Australia, and the United States. As a child and later as a woman she lived for some time in each of these countries. Dr. Pederson-Krag studied medicine in England and psychiatry in the United States. She is author of a story of adventure, "All Aboard for England," and from her rich combination of experiences has given us a very readable publication in which foster parents and social workers will find valuable suggestions. This pamphlet is now available and may be ordered at 25 cents a copy, or in lots of ten or more copies at 20 cents.

Leonard Mayo to Become Dean at Western Reserve

ANOTHER step in his career as an educator will soon be taken by Leonard W. Mayo, President of the League. On January 15, 1941, he leaves his present position as associate executive director of the Welfare Council of New York City, to succeed James Elbert Cutler, dean of the School of Applied Social Sciences of Western Reserve University. Since the end of last year, Dean Cutler, not in best health, has been absent on leave from Western Reserve, and Miss Margaret Johnson, professor of social administration, has served as dean of the School of Applied Social Sciences.

Mr. Mayo will go to Cleveland in January as associate dean and professor of social administration. On July 1, 1941, he will succeed Dr. Cutler as dean, Miss Johnson retaining her professorship.

In 1899 Mayo was born at the Berkshire Industrial Farm, Canaan, New York, where his parents were in charge of that School for Delinquent Boys. Social consciousness was in his blood; his maternal grandfather, the late John Dooley, prominent New York philanthropist, had come to America as an immigrant from Ireland at the age of eight, with his mother, who, in a few days, died of a contagious disease. Their hard-hearted landlord, fearing infection, drove the child into the streets, where the police found him sitting in the gutter at what was destined to be the site of Leake and Watts Orphan House, of which he later became trustee.

In 1922 Mayo was graduated from Colby College and became assistant superintendent of the Opportunity Farm for Boys at New Gloucester, Maine. He also pursued graduate study at New York University and the New York School of Social Work.

He was director of parole, high school instructor and athletic director of Maryland State Training School for Boys in 1923-24. For six years after that he was welfare director, dean of the training school for institutional workers, and assistant director of the Children's Village at Dobbs Ferry, New York. There followed three years in which he taught as a member of the faculty of the New York School of Social Work in charge of courses on institutions and delinquency. In 1935 he was made director of personnel of the Emergency Relief Bureau of New York City.

In 1936 he entered upon his most recent position as assistant and later associate director of New York Welfare Council. During the past summer he has been absent on leave to direct the Child Care Division

of the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children, with responsibility for child refugees.

In addition to the office of president of the Child Welfare League of America, Mr. Mayo is chairman of the Westchester County Council of Social Agencies, and lecturer in the New York School of Social Work and the New School for Social Research. His writings include various articles and pamphlets on child welfare

Regional Views of the Child Welfare League

A BIRD'S-EYE view of the activities and interests of children workers was obtained from recent attendance at three regional conferences of the Child Welfare League of America held at Sturbridge, Massachusetts, Birmingham, Alabama, and St. Louis, Missouri. Certain subjects claimed the attention at all of these conferences, whereas others received particular emphasis only at one or two.

An interest in European children who have come or who may come to the United States was common. In the New England region several hundred children were actually placed in foster homes by League members. In the southern and southwestern regions preparations were made but practically no children were received. The Hillside Children's Centre League member at Rochester, New York, served the largest number of children. Another large group, which like that in Rochester is outside the three regions visited, was served by the Children's Bureau of the Family Service Society at Canton, Ohio. All who are interested in the care of European children have expressed an eagerness to obtain the League's forthcoming pamphlet, "Children in Exile", by Dr. Pederson-Krag.

Three subjects were discussed in and out of meetings in all of the regions. These included the relation of public and private children's work, the place of family welfare in children's work, and adoption practices.

At the St. Louis conference a large part of the attendance was made up of representatives of Child Welfare Services. From Arkansas alone there were more than twenty of these workers. Heretofore, Arkansas sometimes went unrepresented at League conferences and even now has less well organized children's work than sundry rural areas. It is encouraging to find that within the last five years so many workers whose education and experience suggests competent service, have come into children's

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THE BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS—

Board Members Gather at St. Louis

A distinct characteristic of the League's Southwest Regional Conference, held at St. Louis November 7 to 9, 1940, was the participation of members of the governing boards of child caring agencies and institutions.

An institute for board members was led by Miss Gertrude Taggart, for some time on the Board of Managers of the Children's Bureau of the Indianapolis Orphan Asylum, and formerly a member of the Board of Directors of the Child Welfare League of America. About thirty attended this five hour institute and there discussed many common experiences. The group included Mr. Ben Taub, President of the DePelchin Faith Home and Children's Bureau of Houston, Texas, who like Miss Taggart has had a large share in the development in his community of a modern child caring agency out of an old children's institution. Most of the board members were from St. Louis, though some travelled distances from points between Indianapolis and Houston.

"The Child Welfare League of America and the Citizen," was the subject of a luncheon address by Mr. Frank R. Pentlarge, Attorney of New York City, a member of the Board of Directors of the Children's Home and Welfare Society of Montclair, New Jersey, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Child Welfare League. Mr. Pentlarge says in part—

"The sphere of the League is as 'broad as the Chancellor's Foot' to use an old legal phrase—it covers in short the domain of child welfare on a nation-wide scale. * * * * *

"First of all the Child Welfare League is a coordinating body. While local conditions and environment will always be a potent factor, the need for a nation-wide coordination of objectives, procedure and inter-agency cooperation is obvious. I venture to say that many of the business men present here today have risked even prosecution under the Sherman Anti-Trust Law and allied acts in order to have the advantage which comes with national coordination in any sphere of business endeavor. If this is so in the business and professional world, how much more important is close cooperation needed in the social field, particularly as applied to efforts with our dependent children, nation-wide. Here all effort is at the cost of either contributed time or trust funds. We may risk our own personal wealth in a business enterprise, but there is no excuse for wasting privately contributed funds through ill-advised use thereof. * * * * *

"As fitting a national organization the main office of the League stands ready to give impersonal advice to meet the board needs and problems of its constituent members. If the importance of the problems justifies the service, and within reasonable expenditures, personal contact is made locally. Sometimes a single conference with someone outside the immediate problem will remove its causes, factual as well as emotional—as often the latter is a very vital factor in the picture. * * * * *

"A monthly bulletin is published for members, their staffs, and now for board members. National trends, technical developments and contact items appear in this publication. * * * * *

"Finally, there is an 'intangible' which perhaps justifies the League above and beyond all other factors,—the relation of the private citizen to his government in respect to the philosophy of child welfare. Regardless of the fact that today we have in our Federal Children's Bureau a magnificent organization, working for the protection and improvement of the condition of dependent children of America, it is fundamental that the general public should have some organization through which it can be articulate. To my mind the day when the private agencies, and those interested therein cease to influence public opinion in the child welfare field, to the degree at least as do public agencies, will mark the commencement of regimentation and bureaucracy in respect to America's hundreds of thousands of dependent children. The philosophy of child care must always vest in the general public. To meet this objective a national organization, dependent on the individual citizen, is essential."

Mr. Berthoud Clifford, Treasurer of the St. Louis Children's Aid Society, who presided at this luncheon introduced Mr. Pentlarge and Mr. Howard W. Hopkirk, the League's new Executive Director.

A closing session also brought board membership into action. A panel discussion of practical politics and the implications for those who would obtain good child welfare laws made this one of the most interesting sessions ever held at any of the League's conferences. Two men experienced in law building told how it is done in Missouri and Wisconsin. They were Mr. George Rozier, a member of the Missouri Senate and of the Missouri State Committee to Study Children's Needs, and Mr. Edmund B. Shea, a member of the Board of Directors of the Children's Service Association, Milwaukee, a member of the League's Board of Directors and of the Wisconsin Children's Code Commission at the time the child welfare laws of that state were revised and greatly improved.

Like a well balanced board of management this discussion panel was made up of both women and men. The leader was Mrs. Ralph F. Fuchs, President of the League of Women Voters, University City, Missouri, formerly Program Secretary for Government and Child Welfare, National League of Women Voters. Mrs. Frederick B. Eiseman represented one of the League's four St. Louis members most active in preparing and conducting the Southwest Regional Conference. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Children's Aid Society and member of the St. Louis County Social Security Commission and the Advisory Committee, Child Welfare Services, St. Louis County. The other members of the panel were Miss Gertrude Taggart, Member of the Board of Managers of the Indianapolis Orphan Asylum, and Mr. Benjamin E. Youngdahl, Associate Professor of Social Work, George Warren Brown Department of Social Work, Washington University.

Members of boards of trustees of member agencies are invited to make this page their own forum.

Regional Views of the Child Welfare League

(Continued from page 5)

work of such states. These workers were to be found at every meeting, enriching every program. Many of them formerly worked for members of the Child Welfare League. They and others are eager for the League to keep closely in touch with their developing program.

In the last issue of this BULLETIN there appeared the conference paper on "Services to Children Provided by Family and Children's Agencies" by Dorothy K. Howerton, of the Church Home Society, Boston, Massachusetts. There is considerable interest in the relationship between family welfare and children's work, and no doubt there will follow other League publications on the subject.

Adoption practices and laws pertaining to adoptions were discussed by social workers and attorneys and received most attention at the Southern Regional Conference. The wide-spread and sustained interest in this subject has led the League to request the manuscript on "Some Aspects of Good Adoptive Practices," by Miss Sophie van Senden Theis, of the State Charities Aid Association, New York.

Discussion of the White House Conference in terms of its follow-up was given special attention at the Southern Regional Conference. At St. Louis the suggestion was made that the role of social work in defense and follow-up by the White House Conference will in many ways coincide. With reference to defense, it was agreed that child caring agencies generally will find requests for additional service only if mobilization is prolonged. In that event there will be additional work for such agencies and it may be quite necessary to anticipate such calls for service in terms of money and staff which may be needed.

Board members were specially active at the St. Louis conference, and one page of this BULLETIN tells of this outstanding characteristic of the first Southwestern Regional Conference which has been held in several years.

Large attendance at institutes, in Birmingham and St. Louis, reflected a tremendous demand for educational service, coming from agencies both within and outside our membership. About 400 enrolled for the six institutes held in St. Louis, and a large room was required for those attending one institute at Birmingham, conducted by Dr. Frederick H. Allen, Director of the Child Guidance Clinic at Philadelphia. In these groups can be found board members, executives, social workers, institution personnel and a surprisingly large number of others who are

gravitating towards the League because of their interest in all American children and especially those who are dependent and neglected. These included court workers, nurses, teachers and recreation workers.

One feature of the New England Conference warrants special attention. For the past two years a one-day conference has been set aside for sessions restricted to three representatives from each of the League's member agencies within the region. This allowed more discussion than in larger regional meetings, a plan which other regions might consider adopting. The New England plan includes not only a one-day restricted session in the Fall but also the more conventional conference, open to all who wish to attend, which is held in the Spring.

It is obvious that the League has great educational responsibilities ahead of it. There was popular acceptance of the plans now being formulated for about ten seminars for case work supervisors. It is probable that such seminars well led, and of at least one week's duration, will greatly increase the effectiveness of all our members and provide an impetus for further educational efforts. Institutes for executives, case workers, institution workers and board members are needed far more than we have realized. This is particularly true in regions where the League has been active.

The League's reorganized program calls for far more regional activity than there has been.

BOOK NOTES

THE ADOPTED CHILD LOOKS ON ADOPTION: Carol Prentice. 222 pp., 1940. D. Appleton-Century Company, New York. \$2.00.

This autobiographical story of two adoption experiences is an event for the layman as well as for the social worker.

Mrs. Carol Prentice was herself adopted at the age of five. Several years after her marriage, to balance her masculine family of two boys, she adopted a little girl. A few years later Mrs. Prentice had intimate and valuable connections as a committee member concerned with the remodelling of child-placing laws in both Wisconsin and California. Mrs. Prentice's life story encompasses the whole process of evolution in social thinking and planning for the adoption of children. Between the lines of the story of the methods of child-placing used in her own adoption, the improved methods and attitudes when she adopted a child, and finally when she later became part of the movement for a more socially accepted point of view and practice, is contained the story of the struggle for better adoption laws.

A critical and fatal illness made it necessary for her mother to consider placing little Carol for adoption. The father had died shortly before of the same illness. Friends flew hastily to the rescue and "just placed" the little girl with two wealthy, devoted spinsters. These women managed a private school for girls where Mrs. Prentice lived throughout her early life.

How she felt when neighbors and friends expressed in her presence, all too frankly, many unfavorable opinions against adoption, and the stigma attached to being adopted in those days, is graphically told. She discusses excellently the advantages of the influence of both a father and a mother in the development of a growing child through presenting what it meant to her to be adopted by two unmarried women.

Based upon such real experience and evaluated through mature thinking, the subject in this book carries a validity which is invaluable to all who would be adoptive parents. The style is charming and delightful, the presentation simple and clear.

Her growing awareness of the importance of the services of social agencies for the protection of both the prospective parents and the child carries added conviction which comes from Mrs. Prentice's professional experiences as a lawyer. To social workers this book is valuable for it affords an opportunity to test their professional experiences and thinking against those of an intelligent person outside the field whose own experience gives her a unique point of view. Here is social thinking in a simple, direct style.

—MARGARET G. BOURNE
Consultant, Probate Court

LIFE AND GROWTH: Alice V. Keliher. D. Appleton-Century Company, New York. 1940.

Miss Alice Keliher's book, "Life and Growth," in actuality is the fruit of a group's investigation and discrimination. These educators, to my mind, are among the outstanding in their profession. I cannot praise the book too highly as one which takes in, in a very simple way, that area which concerns the adolescent. As the preface states:

"An important section of this book deals with problems of sex development and sex functioning. The questions revealed confusions, uncertainties, misinformation and lack of information in this field particularly. The Commission believes that this situation causes many difficulties in human relations; therefore, we have tried to

present frank and medically accurate material to meet this need."

They know whereof they speak and how to present it. I heartily recommend this book.

—EDWARD LISS, M.D.

Chairman of Committee for Mental Hygiene Education, Progressive Education Association, Committee on Mental Hygiene, the State Charities Aid Association

A Manual of Medical Procedure

THE Information Service has recently been asked by a number of agencies for suggestions about procedure and methods of record keeping for their medical departments. The League is, therefore, glad to announce for circulation the "Manual of Procedure of the Medical Department of the Foster Home Bureau of the New York Association for Jewish Children."

It covers a detailed description of clinical equipment, including medical supplies and personnel, and of the operation of clinics. The title falls short of indicating how comprehensive a guide it is. There is a discussion of some of the more common childhood diseases, their treatment and necessary nursing service. Diet suggestions, including menus and routines for infants and convalescent children, are helpfully listed. There are record forms for medical examination and continued medical service. The Manuals may be had upon request for a two-weeks' period.

READERS' FORUM

TO THE EDITOR:

As a member of a local committee discussing the responsibility of police departments and social agencies in the care of the unmarried mother who is a minor, may I request information?

A question has recently arisen in this community regarding the responsibility of health and social agencies for referring unmarried mothers under 18 to the police department for the purpose of filing a complaint against the alleged father.

It was generally thought that case work methods were more successful than law enforcement in this particular problem and that our responsibility was determined according to the need of the individual case.

The agencies feel resistive toward this plan, but at the same time we may be assuming more responsibility than a social agency has a right to so we are really trying to think it through from other viewpoints than our own.

Can you help us by referring us to written material pertaining to this problem, or to other agencies where the problem and philosophy of this phase of unmarried mother work has been under discussion?

Readers are urged to send in comments, replies, and other questions.